

**Daniel Mathieu**  
**Charter Oak State College**

Good afternoon Representatives, Senators and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My Name is Daniel Mathieu, and I am a fifty five year old veteran. After my service in the United States navy, I returned to Connecticut and for the last thirty-two years have been working in the human services field. Through my passion for helping people with developmental disabilities and a strong work ethic I was able to rise up the ranks and make a comfortable career. I am also a father of three children, and have three grandchildren. I work full time for a non-profit that provided residential service for people in with Intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and also have a part time job doing the same thing, working in a group home close to my home. However, despite all of this, there was always something missing. I have had a lifelong dream of earning a bachelor's degree.

There were many mornings I woke regretting not completing my degree, or many nights I stayed awake thinking about it, but it was always put on a back shelf and was grey cloud I carried around with me. There were so many excuses not to do it, I did not have the time, it would take too long, I cannot afford it, I don't need it anyway etc. There were a few times that I tried, I would go for a semester, all the excuses would come true, and I would quit and sulk about it.

Then three years ago in December of 2018, I discovered Charter Oak, I was not sure what I was getting into, but I signed up. I knew nothing about online learning or what it would be like. One of the first things that stood out to me was that I could receive college credits for my experiences in the Navy. I was able to convert classes I took in the Navy to over thirty college credits, as far as I know Charter Oak is the only college that provides this service. I was so grateful for this flexibility. I was also able to get credit for classes I took on my past attempts at going back to school, which helped me get closer to realizing my goal. It made college completion look possible.

I am now in the middle of my last semester and about to graduate in May. Charter Oak was a dream come true, once I got used to online-learning I was able to complete all of my coarse work despite working two jobs and having a very busy home life. The accelerated 8-week semesters enabled me to take four classes a semester, I was able to attain my dream of getting a bachelor's degree in organizational Management and a certificate in healthcare administration in three short years.

This wouldn't have been able to do this without Charter Oak State College. Their low tuition and generous transfer policy made going back to school possible. I am here today to ask that you continue to fund Charter Oak State College. Their structure is unique and valuable to people like me who could not take the traditional path to earning a degree.

Thank you for your time and consideration.